THE STORY OF

JIMI HENDRIX

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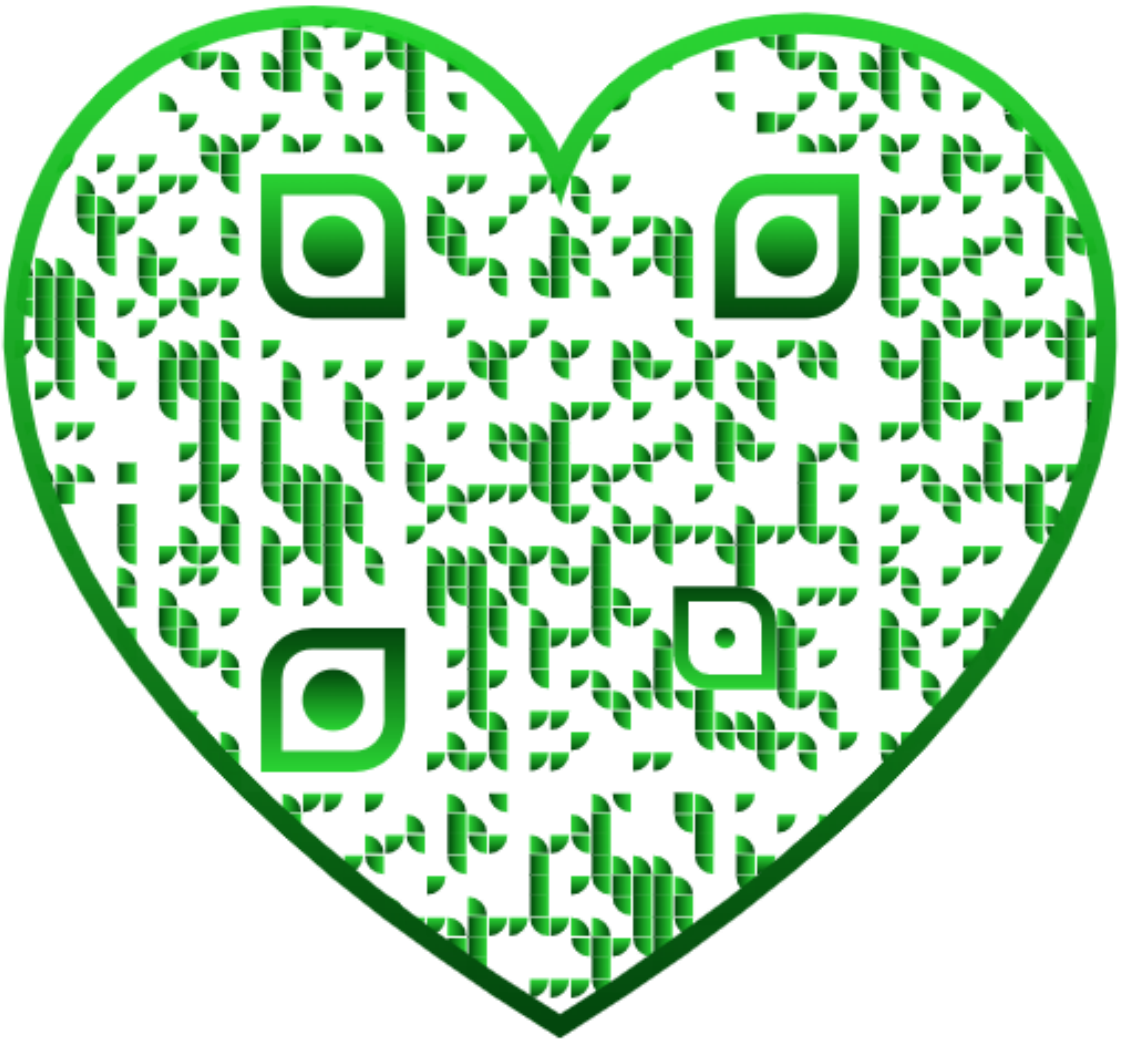

THE STORY OF

JIMI HENDRIX

INNOVATOR • INFLUENCER • ICON

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THE ARTIST AT HOME
On Jan. 4, 1969, Hendrix posed for photos inside his London flat. The apartment has since been restored as a museum to the guitarist.

KODAK TRI-X PAN FILM

INTRODUCTION

ICONIC

At 9 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 18, 1969, after a downpour had left the Woodstock Music and Art Fair a muddy wasteland, Jimi Hendrix riffed his way into history with a rousing anti-war rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Due to technical and weather delays, only about 15,000 people—far fewer than the festival high of 500,000—witnessed the spectacle after having waited all night to hear Hendrix play. When he finally took the stage, his performance was a clarion call: his electric guitar imitating the sounds of war as well as protest, only to emerge as music—familiar, thought provoking, and to many, unmistakably patriotic.

Hendrix was criticized for daring to perform the song outside of its traditional arrangement. "I'm American, so I played it," explained the former 101st Airborne paratrooper. "I thought it was beautiful."

Hendrix played the national anthem 63 times during a two-year period from August 1968 to August 1970, a month before his death at 27. Each time it was a commentary on what was going on in the country—sometimes a shout-out to the Black Panthers and the civil rights struggle, and sometimes against a cry of protest against the Vietnam War or poverty. In short, it was more than a song—it was an experience.

In a Sept. 9, 1969, appearance on *The Dick Cavett Show*, Hendrix demurred when the host said Jimi was one of the best guitar players in the world. "No," Hendrix said. "All right, one of the best in this studio," Cavett retorted. Jimi smiled, and then offered a compromise: "How about the best sitting in this chair?"

His music was a mélange of blues, R&B, rock and psychedelia. All he wanted was to take the listener someplace with his guitar that they'd never been before. "You have to give people something to dream on," Hendrix said.

Hendrix accomplished that goal like no other artist before or since. And he evolved the idea of an American hero—just as he did musically with the national anthem—without compromising its core components: freedom, fearlessness and rugged individuality.

NATIVE SON

On a soggy morning at Woodstock in 1969, Hendrix played a screeching, roaring rendition of the "The Star-Spangled Banner." Rock hasn't been the same since. Neither has the United States.

ROOTS MUSIC
Flanked by Experience bandmates Noel Redding (far left) and Mitch Mitchell, Hendrix poses in Hamburg, Germany, in March 1967.

BETTER WATCH OUT
Hendrix takes a holiday break from pushing the boundaries of music to dress up as a feather-capped Santa Claus (below).

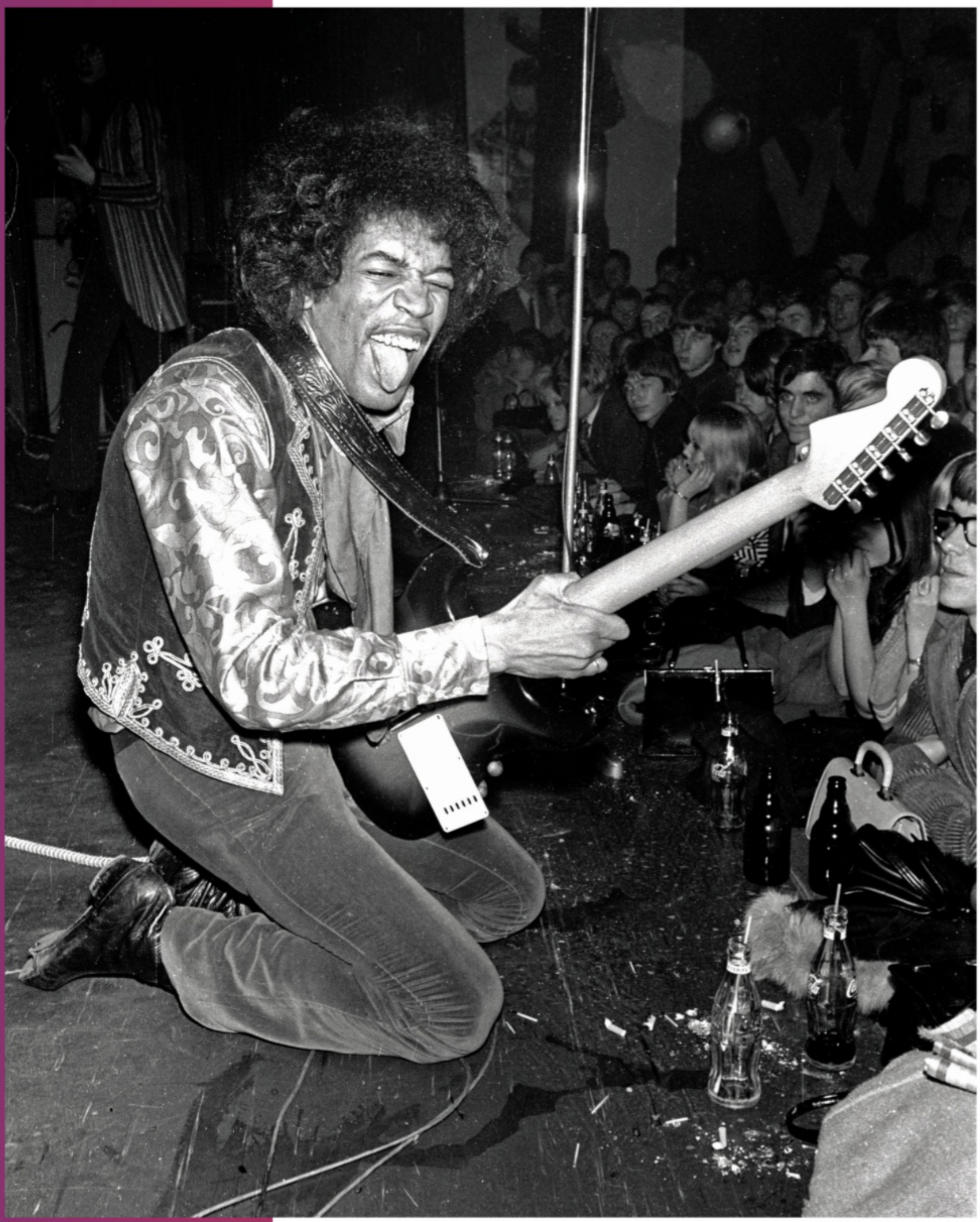
Marshall
Premier

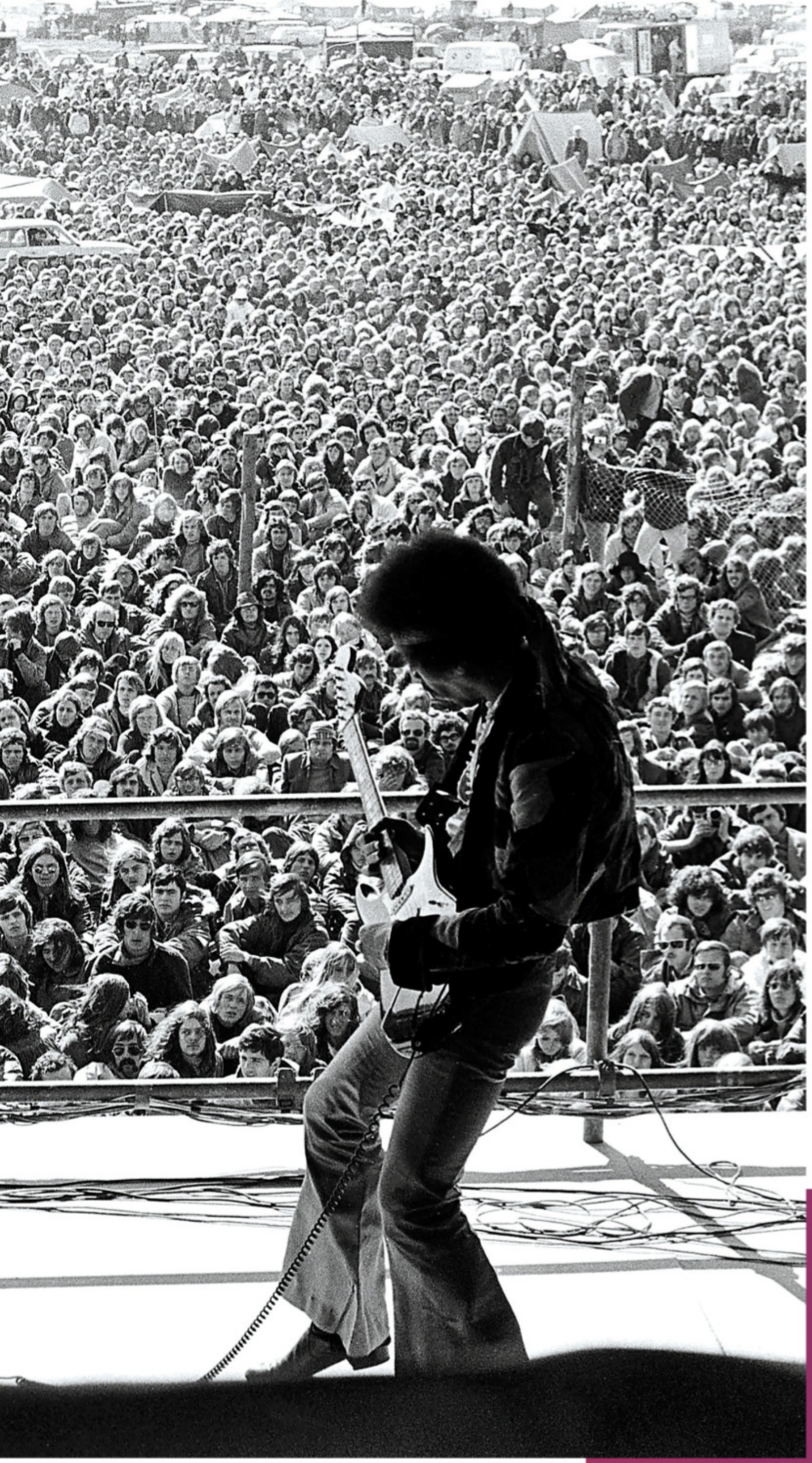
POWER OF THREE
The Jimi Hendrix Experience—with Redding on bass and Mitchell on drums—performs on the German TV show *Beat Club* on March 2, 1967 (below).

MAN ABOUT TOWN
Hendrix on the street in London's Montagu Place in 1967 (below, right)—the year he and his band released *Are You Experienced*—and with Eric Clapton (bottom, right).

TONGUE TWISTER
The power of music forces Hendrix (below) down on his knees during a show at the Star-Club in Hamburg, Germany, on March 17, 1967.

EXPERIENTIAL HAIR
Hendrix poses with Redding (near right) and Mitchell in a studio in 1967. The Experience's three-man lineup perfectly suited Hendrix's guitar virtuosity.

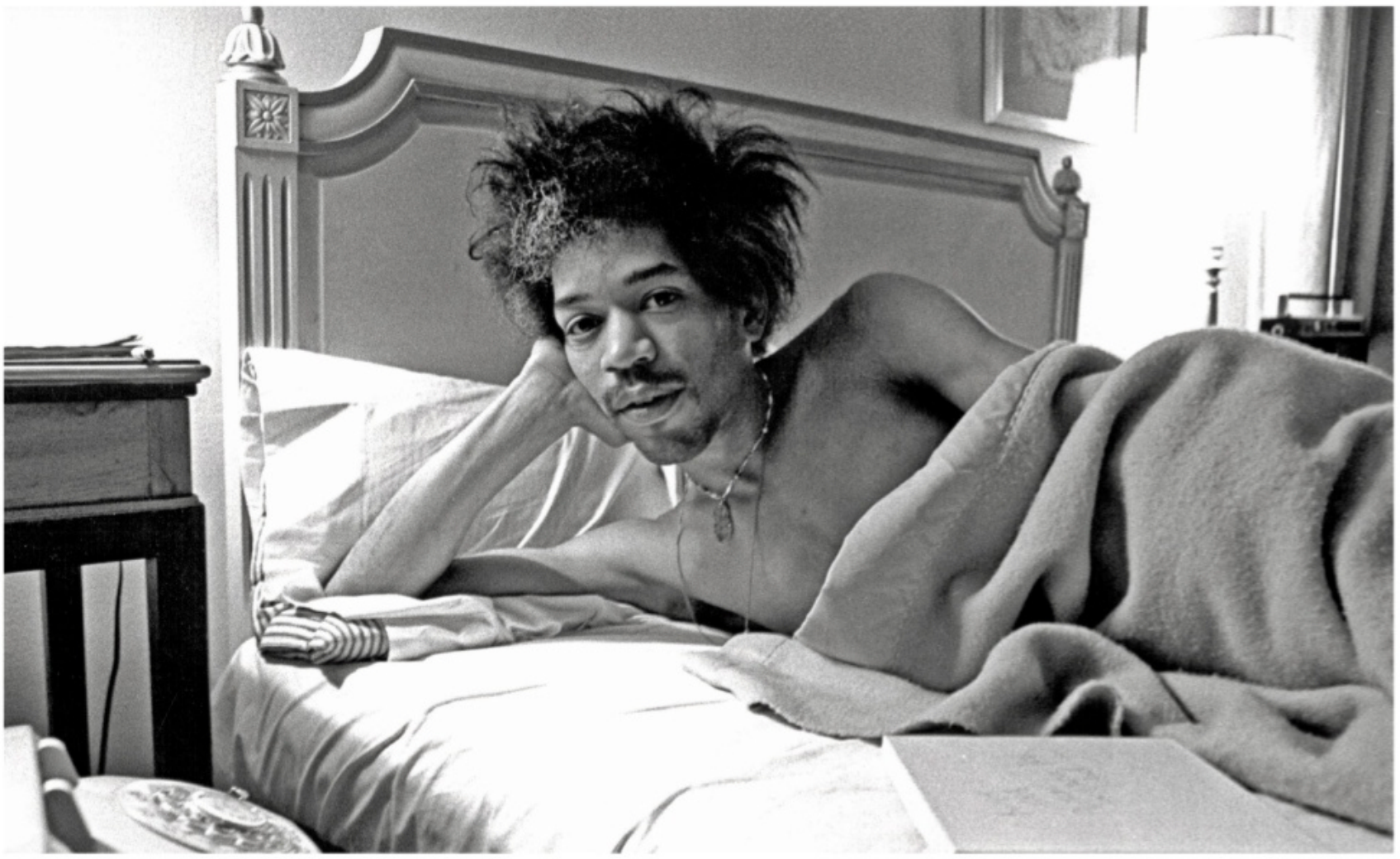




THE LAST SHOW
On Sept. 6, 1970, Hendrix played his final concert, in Fehmarn, Germany. Weather had delayed the show, and many in the crowd booed him when he took the stage.

ROYAL REVUE
On Feb. 24, 1969, the original lineup of the Jimi Hendrix Experience played its last show in England at London's Royal Albert Hall (left).

EVERYDAY GRIND
Hendrix—performing on *The Dick Cavett Show* in 1969 (below, top), and relaxing in his New York hotel in '68—spent four years on the road.



CHAPTER 1

LET THERE BE MUSIC

Jimi Hendrix followed in the footsteps of pioneers, and then redefined the sound of rock 'n' roll

HEAR ME CRYIN'
The electrification of music transformed the guitar into the essential instrument of the 20th century, during which it helped shape R&B—especially in the hands of Howlin' Wolf (right)—and rock 'n' roll.

Fifteenth-century Spain is most noted in history books for the Inquisition. But while Torquemada was torturing heretics, Spanish artisans were perfecting early versions of an instrument that would one day revolutionize music: the acoustic guitar, then known as the *vihuela*, or *viola da mano* (hand violin). The stringed instrument rose in prominence during the following centuries and eventually became a diversion of the European elite. (Even Napoleon was a guitarist—his collection of instruments was discovered after his death.) Various innovations followed, including the addition of a sixth string. And then, in the 1920s, everything changed with the invention of the amplifier. Music had gone electric, and within 30 years, rock 'n' roll as we know it would be charging into the future.

The first commercially advertised electric guitar was made by Chicago's Stromberg-Voisinet company in 1929. Two years later, Adolph Rickenbacker and George Beauchamp founded the Electro String Instrument Corporation in Los Angeles and began selling them, too. And in 1941, guitarist Les Paul created his landmark solid-body version.

In 1939, Charlie Christian, a jazzman who played in the Benny Goodman Orchestra, popularized the electric guitar solo. "Guitar players have long needed a champion, someone to explain to the world that a guitarist is something more than a robot pluckin' on a gadget to keep the rhythm going," Christian said.

In the years that followed, many such "champions" would emerge. The grandest of them all was a young man from Seattle named James Marshall Hendrix, who absorbed the work of a pantheon of other players to create his own unique style. During his brief guitar-playing life—he started in his early teens and died at 27—Hendrix cited many influences, Buddy Holly, Eddie Cochran and B.B. King among them. But there was one player who Hendrix idolized more than anyone else: "The first guitarist I was aware of was Muddy Waters," Hendrix told *Rolling Stone* in 1968. "I heard one of his old records when I was a little boy and it scared me to death, because I heard all of those sounds. Wow, what is

"You're always cursing ... you're always praying, and you're always making love. It ain't do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do."

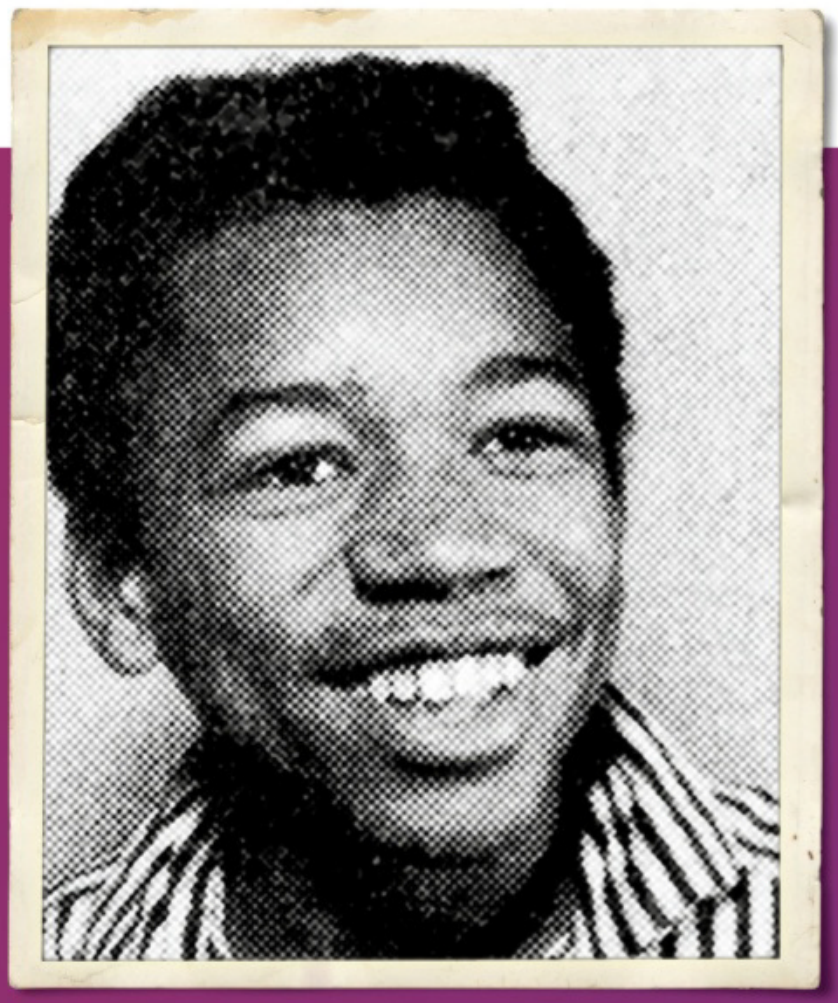
–Carlos Santana

ROCK OF AGES
With roots in 15th-century Spain, the guitar gradually grew in popularity until it became a favorite of European nobility (left).

ELECTRIC GUY
Besides appearing with his trio on CBS Radio in 1941 (above), Les Paul also created the first solid-body electric guitar.

that all about?" Waters was a key bridge between the blues and rock 'n' roll. He even declared it in song: "The Blues Had a Baby and They Named It Rock and Roll."

Hendrix also listened to other guitar pioneers, including Howlin' Wolf and Robert Johnson, "the King of the Delta Blues." Johnson is a bona fide figure of American folklore, having ostensibly sold his soul to the devil at a Mississippi crossroads in exchange for his talent. Though he wasn't recognized for his genius until decades after his 1938 death (like Hendrix, at 27) he introduced a modern style of guitar playing, strumming fills, chords and bass lines with a thumb pick—and occasionally playing with a slide—all while singing. At the time, guitarists usually stopped strumming while playing fills. Johnson's musical phrasing was revolutionary, and he was also the first to incorporate a "boogie blues" piano-like riff into his playing, as heard in "I Believe I'll Dust My Broom." In 1956, Howlin' Wolf found national fame on the strength of his signature R&B song, "Smokestack Lightning," featuring a powerful guitar riff over



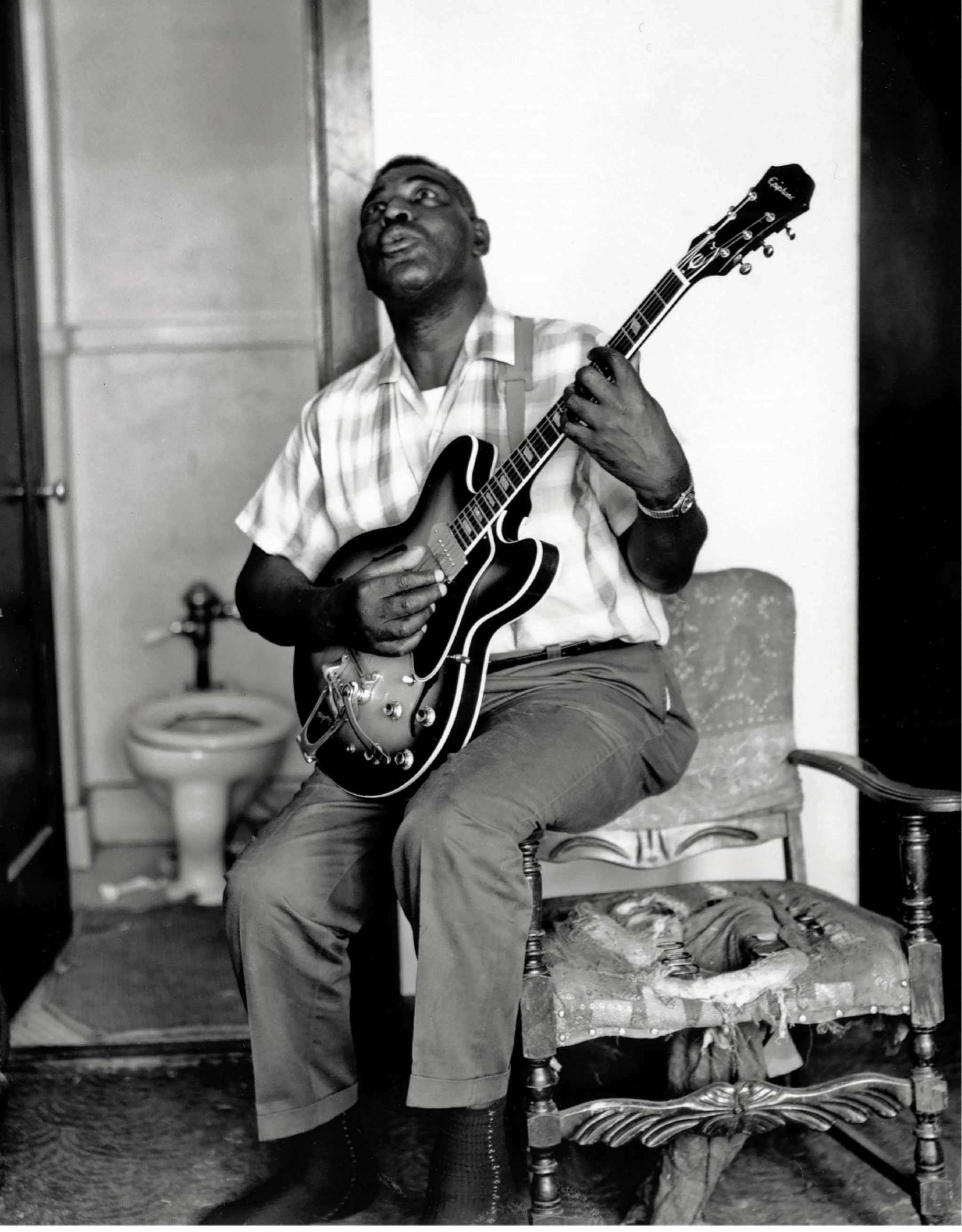
FIRST-STRINGER
Guitarist Charlie Christian (right) performing in the orchestra of bandleader Benny Goodman in New York in 1939.

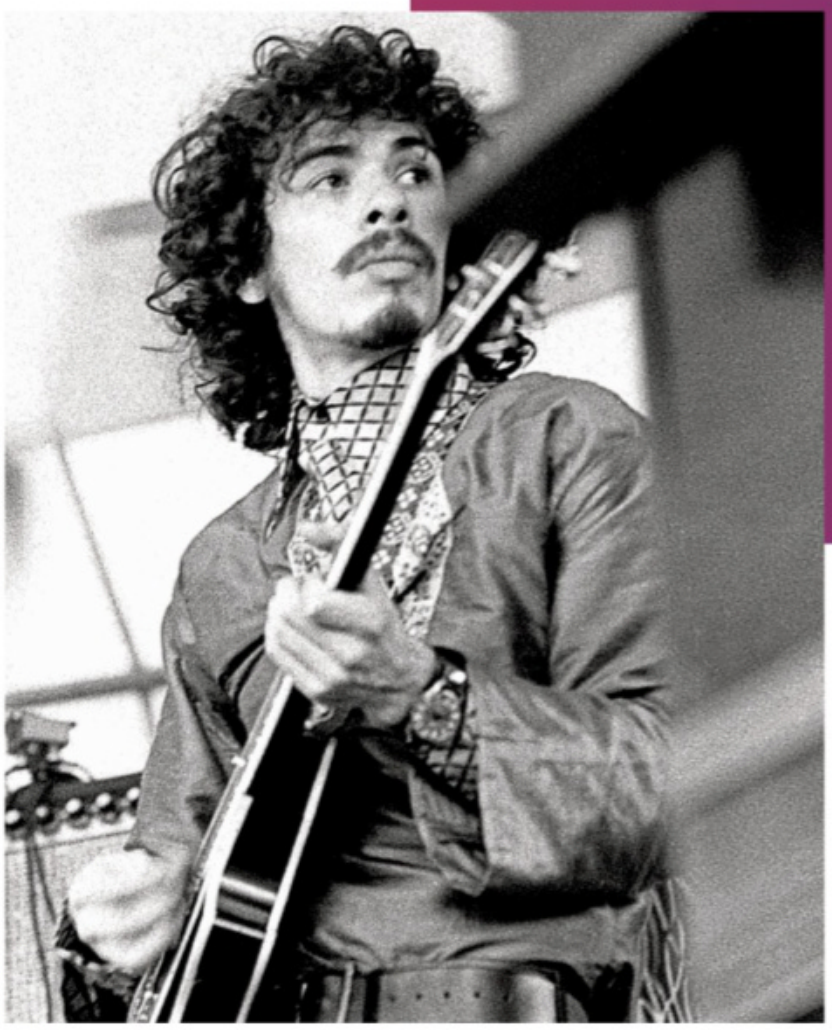
VOODOO CHILD
In 1959, eight years before he shot to stardom, Jimi Hendrix (left) was a freshman at Seattle's Washington Junior High.

“A guitarist is something more than a robot pluckin’ on a gadget to keep the rhythm going.”

–Charlie Christian

TRUE BLUESMAN
One of the first blues artists Hendrix could recall hearing was Muddy Waters (far left, in concert circa 1960).





a single chord. This raw style is what first drew the teenage Hendrix to the guitar.

But Hendrix quickly became bored with the instrument. That all changed in the late 1950s, when he saw and heard Chuck Berry for the first time. Berry made the guitar the star both in his music and on the stage, playing behind his head and between his legs. His infectious energy and showmanship helped "Johnny Be Good," "Roll Over Beethoven" and "Back in the USA" become instant classics. Mirroring Hendrix's future, Berry was a Black artist who mesmerized young white audiences. Hendrix also drew inspiration—and a foundation in the blues—from Ray Charles, who lived in Seattle from 1948 to '50, and Elmore James, "the King of Slide Guitar."

Why was the guitar the instrument of rock's evolution? Carlos Santana, a contemporary of Hendrix's in the late 1960s, explained it simply, saying that playing the guitar is pure emotion. "You're always cursing, and you're always praying, and you're always making love," he said. "It ain't do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do." Hendrix embodied this notion. The electric guitar became the left-handed Hendrix's metaphorical right hand—an extension of his creativity, his feelings and his life's essence. The fact that he achieved so much in such a short period of time is a wonder. His virtuosity was so complete that, more than 50 years after his death, guitarists and fans continue to return to his work to find inspiration.

In 1967, when Hendrix was 25, he was asked about his current guitar influences. He replied with honesty: "Well, I don't have any right now." It was because he'd already transcended them all.

HEAT LIGHTNING
Another early influence on Hendrix was Howlin' Wolf (left, in 1968), especially his seminal song, "Smokestack Lightning."

BERRY GOOD
Hendrix was inspired enough by the energy of Chuck Berry (above, left) to transcend such contemporaries as Carlos Santana (above, right).

CHAPTER 2

GUITAR FOR HIRE

Music was Jimi Hendrix's escape

GETTING EXPERIENCE
From his humble beginnings in Seattle—where his first "guitar" was a broom—Hendrix (right) was soon traveling the country, first with the military, and later as a musician in other artists' bands.

On Nov. 27, 1942, the night Jimi Hendrix was born in Seattle, "the moon turned a fire red." At least that's what he sang in his 1968 hit "Voodoo Chile." While perhaps not literal, the lyric does shed some light on Hendrix's upbringing. He made his life story into a beautiful myth because the reality of it was so painful. He was born Johnny Allen Hendrix—the eldest child of Lucille and Al Hendrix. His father changed Johnny's name to James Marshall in 1946, and the boy's family called him "Buster." Young Hendrix revered his mother, but she was in and out of his life.

When his parents were together, they often had brutal, alcohol-fueled fights. Lucille and Al divorced in December 1951, and Al gained custody of Jimi and his younger brother, Leon. (The Hendrixes gave their other three children up for adoption through foster care, Lucille died in 1958.) Al may have been in charge, but he wasn't always present. The two brothers bounced between their their maternal grandmother; their paternal grandmother in Vancouver, British Columbia; an aunt in Seattle; and various neighborhood friends.

Money was always an issue, and the boys didn't have much in the way of luxuries—or even toys. As a child, Jimi grew attached to a broom, which he used to pretend was a guitar. He even took it to school. When Al enlisted his sons to help him make some extra cash by cleaning out a neighborhood garage, Jimi earned a battered ukulele for his efforts. It had only one string, but it was better than the broom.

Jimi didn't start playing the guitar until he was a teenager, strumming on a $5 model his father had bought from a friend. A year later, Al purchased his son's first electric guitar. Jimi was left-handed, so he had to restring the instrument and play it upside down—but he made it work. Soon after, he joined his first group, the Rocking Kings. It was about as close to a plan as he had for his future.

ROCK 'N' ROLL CALL
Hendrix (far left) found time to jam even when he was in basic training at Fort Ord in California in 1961.

CHAPTER 2

FAMILY TIES
Hendrix's paternal grandparents, Ross and Nora Hendrix (below), lived in Vancouver, British Columbia. As a child, Jimi stayed with Nora for a time.

PLUCKY PRIVATE
As a soldier, Hendrix (right, at Fort Ord in 1961) paid more attention to music than military duties. The Army eventually honorably discharged him in 1962.

"Down there, you have to play with your teeth or else you get shot! There's ... broken teeth all over the stage."

–Jimi Hendrix

Then, in May 1961, eight months after he'd dropped out of Seattle's Garfield High, Hendrix was arrested for joyriding in a stolen car. He received a two-year suspended sentence after the public defender told the judge that Hendrix was going to join the Army. Hendrix didn't want to enlist, but he also didn't want to go to jail. A month later, he was in Fort Ord in California for basic training, after which he was assigned to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where he trained with the 101st Airborne Division. He graduated from jump school but had a general dislike for Army life. "There's nothing but physical training and harassment," he wrote in a letter home. "They work you to DEATH, fussing and fighting."

Homesick, the 19-year-old Hendrix wrote to his father and asked him to get his guitar from his girlfriend, Betty-Jean Morgan, and send it to him. His strumming caught the ear of a fellow serviceman named Billy Cox, who played bass, and the two became fast friends. (Cox reportedly described Hendrix's sound as John Lee Hooker meets Beethoven.) Together they formed a band called the Kasuals, with Maj. Charles Washington on sax, and began finding local gigs. Hendrix began to put more effort into making music than his military duties. It did not go unnoticed. A February 1962 report from Capt. Gilbert Batchman read: "Individual is unable to conform to military rules and regulations. Misses bed check; sleeps while supposed to be working; unsatisfactory duty performance. Requires excessive supervision at all times."

A little more than a year after Hendrix had enlisted, the Army discharged him after he injured his ankle on a combat parachute jump. With the U.S. preparing to ramp up its deployments of military personnel to Vietnam, it was a fortuitous turn of events. Celebrating his first night out of the Army, Hendrix blew nearly $400 at a jazz club in nearby Clarksville, Tennessee, and had no money to get back to Seattle. He was too afraid to ask his father for cash, so he started working as a guitar for hire, playing Black clubs across the South. Crowds on the "Chitlin' Circuit" didn't just want music—they wanted a show. The 2013 book *Starting at Zero* quotes Hendrix on the circuit's atmosphere: "Down there, you have to play with your teeth or else you get shot! There's a trail of broken teeth all over the stage."

STRONG SIDEMAN
Hendrix (below, far left, in 1964) in the Isley Brothers' band, which he'd joined after winning the Apollo Theater's talent contest.

PLAY ACTION
Hendrix (right, at the same New York gig) left the Isleys because, in his words, he "got tired of playing in the key of F all the time."

CHAPTER 2

SHOW STOPPER
Hendrix spent time backing up—and learning from—Jackie Wilson (left), one of the greatest live entertainers in R&B history.

PIANO MAN
Another one of the artists that Hendrix backed after he left the Isley Brothers' band was singer-songwriter Sam Cooke (below).

Those gigs gave Hendrix valuable insight: Talent alone was not enough.

Those gigs gave Hendrix valuable insight: Talent alone was not enough. "Down south at some funky club, one cat up there starving to death ... he might be the best guitar player you ever heard, and you might not know his name," he told *Rolling Stone* in 1968. He formed a group called the King Kasuals, and they played a Clarksville spot called W & W Man—Hendrix referred to it as "Wicked and Wrong" because they were always underpaid. He soon moved on to playing in Nashville (where he witnessed frequent race riots) and performing under the name Jimmy James—the surname taken from his blues idol, Elmore James.

He soon moved on to Buffalo, and then made his way to New York City for the first time, winning the Apollo Theater's amateur contest. While in New York, the Isley Brothers saw him playing one night and asked him to join their backing band. Hendrix lived with the Isleys at their New Jersey home for two years until he "got tired of playing in the key of F all the time." He left them while in Nashville, and for the next couple of months played with a soul revue that included Sam Cooke, Jackie Wilson and B.B. King.

And then, one night in Kansas City, Missouri, Hendrix missed the tour bus. With no money, he was stranded—and, once again, luck changed his life. He latched on as a sideman with Little Richard. Hendrix had proven that he could survive on his wits and guitar playing. Soon, he would be striving for even more.

CHAPTER 3

CHANCE ENCOUNTERS

Hendrix was too good to work in the shadows of other people

LONDON CALLING
After years of supporting roles—sometimes in famous acts—Hendrix (right) went out on his own in 1966. He got his start in Greenwich Village, but it wasn't until he moved to England that his career took flight.

Little Richard may have been one of the most outrageous performers of the early rock era, but Jimi Hendrix found working for him to be a lot like his stint in the military. Not only did the bouffant-haired piano pounder from Macon, Georgia, keep strict (and random) rules, but he also had a jealous streak for anyone who he felt might upstage him.

That made Hendrix—still working under the stage name Jimmy James—a marked man. When "Jimmy" wore a frilly shirt at one gig, the singer scolded him: "I am Little Richard. I am the King of Rock 'n' Rhythm and I'm the only one who's going to look pretty onstage." Richard held constant meetings about his expectations for the band and fined members if they didn't comply with his edicts. Once, Richard objected to Hendrix's hairstyle—too long—but the guitarist refused to cut it. His defiance cost him a $5 fine, the penalty that Richard would levy for violations as small as wearing two different color shoelaces.

"Everyone in the band was brainwashed," Hendrix said in his memoir *Starting at Zero*. The guitar prodigy felt that, in such an environment, he "couldn't really develop under [Richard's] influence." After touring all across America, Hendrix reached the

LITTLE GENERAL
Hendrix found playing for Little Richard (left)—and following his often arbitrary rules—to be stifling.

COMPANY MAN
Richard (below, far right) performing with his Royal Company band in 1965, the year Hendrix left the group.

When "Jimmy" wore a frilly shirt at one gig, [Little Richard] scolded him.

breaking point in Los Angeles. He hadn't been paid in five and a half weeks, so he simply walked away for good. "You can't live on promises when you're on the road, so I had to cut that mess loose," he said.

Hendrix returned to New York City and lived in Harlem, where he took jobs as a session player. In 1965 he joined an R&B group called Curtis Knight and the Squires. He also played for acts as wide-ranging as Joey Dee and the Starliters, Chubby Checker and even a jukebox band. The gigs kept Hendrix fed, but they didn't nourish his ambitions. He disliked being what he called "just another Negro guitarist."

Something had to change. In an August 1965 letter to his father, Hendrix laid out a plan to become famous—on his own—standing center stage rather than off to the side. It entailed putting out a record and, as he put it, singing badly. "Nowadays people don't want you to sing good," he wrote. "They want you to sing sloppy and have a good beat to your songs. That's what angle I'm going to shoot for."

Hendrix moved from Harlem to Greenwich Village, where he said the people were friendlier. He'd been taunted on the uptown streets for his long hair and taste in clothes, with people saying such things as, "What's this supposed to be? Black Jesus?"

Downtown, among the "hippies," Hendrix felt that he fit in better. "I couldn't stand [Harlem] because they talk about you worse than anyplace else ... your

own people hurt you more," he later recalled. "The Village was groovy. I'd just lay around and play for about two dollars a night and then try to find a place to stay."

As a child, Hendrix said that he'd had dreams about the numbers one, nine and six. He didn't know what they meant, but by the summer of 1966, the significance became clear. That was the year when his entire life changed—not just for the better, but for the incredible.

First, Hendrix formed his own band, the Blue Flames, which gained a following at clubs around the Village. Musicians on the New York scene began referring to him as "Dylan Black" because he wore his hair like Bob Dylan, who was also playing many of the same clubs. Hendrix had watched the Minnesota native perform and started writing his own songs. The two would-be legends even hung out together once, getting stoned at the Kettle of Fish.

"The Village was groovy. I'd just lay around and play for about two dollars a night and then try to find a place to stay."

–Jimi Hendrix

SIDE HUSTLE
After his return to New York in 1965, Hendrix (near right) joined an R&B group called Curtis Knight and the Squires.

“I couldn’t stand [Harlem] because they talk about you worse than anyplace else.”

–Jimi Hendrix

SESSION STRUMMER
In addition to his gig with the Squires (above), Hendrix worked with a wide variety of acts, including Joey Dee and the Starliters (left).

Playing the New York scene also brought Hendrix to the attention of Linda Keith, whose boyfriend at the time was Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards. In August 1966, Keith convinced the Stones' manager, Andrew Loog Oldham, to come see Hendrix play at Café Au Go Go. It did not go well. Though Keith had allowed Hendrix to borrow her boyfriend's white Stratocaster, Jimi was a bit too stoned and nervous. He played with his teeth—the crowd-pleasing flourish he'd learned down south—but Oldham wasn't impressed. According to the 1992 book *Hendrix: Setting the Record Straight*, by author John McDermott and longtime Hendrix engineer and producer Eddie Kramer, Keith recounted the "audition" as an awful night: "Andrew was absolutely turned off and didn't want any part of him. He thought Hendrix was a wild man and just didn't have it."

Undeterred, Keith still found a way to help. She told Bryan "Chas" Chandler, bassist for The Animals, about Hendrix. Chandler caught his act at Café Wha? in the West Village, where Hendrix's guitar riffs could supposedly be heard blocks away in Washington Square Park. Unlike Oldham, Chandler loved what he heard and offered to become Hendrix's manager. The 23-year-old agreed on one condition: that he would get to meet Eric Clapton.

On Sept. 24, 1966, Hendrix landed in England with an overnight bag and a borrowed $40 in his pocket. London was the center of everything happening in music—but the American guitarist was about to become the act everyone wanted to see.

ANIMAL BEAUTY
Hendrix was "discovered" by model Linda Keith (above), who introduced him to Animals bassist Bryan "Chas" Chandler (near left).

ARTIST'S PORTRAIT
After Chandler became Hendrix's manager, Jimi (opposite) left for London in 1966—on the condition he'd get to meet Eric Clapton.

CHAPTER 4

THE EXPERIENCE

Chas Chandler built a band around Hendrix's talents

PURPLE DAZE
When he released *Are You Experienced* in 1967, Hendrix—flanked by bandmates Mitch Mitchell (left) and Noel Redding—introduced a new sound to rock and forever changed the language of music.

Jimi Hendrix arrived in London on an overnight flight from New York on the morning of Sept. 24, 1966, but he had to wait at the airport for several hours before entering the U.K. because he didn't have a work permit. It turned out to be the only setback on his way to becoming a phenomenon.

His manager, Chas Chandler, wasted no time organizing a series of auditions to build a band talented enough to support Hendrix. By Hendrix's fifth day in London, Noel Redding had already signed on to play bass and a few days later Mitch Mitchell auditioned on drums. A band name soon followed: the Jimi Hendrix Experience. The moniker was meant to evoke no single genre of music, but instead several all at once, including rock, blues, R&B and the latest craze in the U.K., psychedelia. A lot of these ideas were conceived by Chandler. "He was forced into an 'English psychedelic bag' and then had to live with it because that's what made him," said Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards in an interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine in 1981. "When I first heard him, he was playing straight-ahead R&B."

If Hendrix was being forced to try new things, he certainly didn't appear to be fighting it. "We don't want to be classed in any category," he said. "We're trying to create our own personal sound, our own music and our own personal being ... it's very primitive thought, you know. That's why I like being called the Experience. It's right."

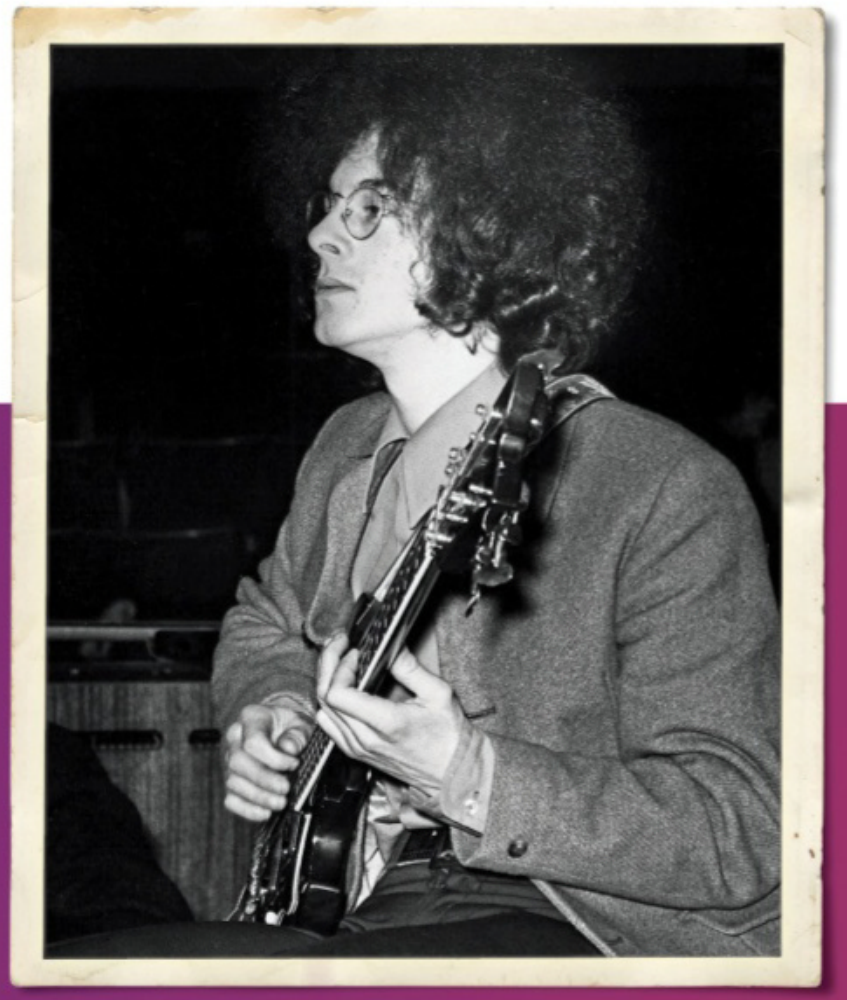
In a letter home to his father, Hendrix bluntly put all that was going on around him into perspective. "I'm in England, Dad," he wrote. "I met some people, and they're going to make me a big star."

Chandler also convinced Hendrix to change the spelling of his first name from "Jimmy" to "Jimi" because it would be more memorable and unique. Hendrix later said his name was "88 percent from my birth certificate, 12 percent from misspelling."

Within three weeks of Hendrix's arrival, the Experience played its first gigs at the Olympia in Paris. By Oct. 23, 1966, the trio had started work on an album, the now iconic *Are You Experienced*.

"We're trying to create our own personal sound, our own music and our own personal being."

–Jimi Hendrix



FIRST EXPERIENCE
Within five days of Hendrix's arrival in London, bassist Noel Redding (above) had already joined the band that would revolutionize rock.

POWER TRIO
The Jimi Hendrix Experience (right)—from left, Redding, Hendrix and Mitchell—on the streets of London in late 1966.

All the while, Hendrix didn't even have a place to live. Instead, he bounced around London—staying with Chandler and crashing with newly made friends. Finally, in December, he moved into a flat owned by Beatles drummer Ringo Starr.

On Dec. 16, 1966, before *Are You Experienced* was even finished, the Experience released its first single, a cover of the Billy Roberts song "Hey Joe." The group played its second single, "Purple Haze," on the BBC's *Top of the Pops* in March 1967.

The Experience completed recording on April 4, 1967—the culmination of 16 often rushed sessions that spanned five months. The album was released in the U.K. on May 12, and in the U.S.— with a different cover and running order—on Aug. 23. Hendrix hated the U.K. cover, which featured him wearing a long, dark cape and towering over Redding and Mitchell. Hendrix thought he looked like a vampire looming over his bandmates. He asked that the American version be more psychedelic, so designer and photographer Karl Ferris was hired based on his work for the Hollies' June 1967 release, *Evolution*. Ferris asked to hear the Experience's music as inspiration. Ferris described what he heard as "so far out that it seemed to come from outer space."

Are You Experienced spent 33 weeks on the U.K. chart, peaking at No. 2, and rose as high as No. 5 on the *Billboard* 200, staying on the ranking for 106 weeks—76 in the Top 40. (In 2005, the Library of Congress added the album to the National Recording Registry.) The hit songs "Hey Joe" (No. 6 in the U.K.), "Purple Haze" (No. 3) and "The Wind Cries Mary" (No. 6) were only on the U.S. release track list. However, the album was not an immediate critical hit. Reviewed in the debut issue of *Rolling Stone*, it was actually panned. "The inanity of the lyrics too often get in the way," was one critique. The writeup

BLENDING GENRES
The sound of Hendrix (left, in London in 1967) and the Experience was a mix of rock, blues, R&B and psychedelia.

CHAPTER 4

IN LIVING COLOR
In March 1967, Hendrix and his band performed "Purple Haze" on BBC's *Top of the Pops* (below).

SOUND STAGE
On Feb. 9, 1967, three months before the release of his debut, Hendrix (left) played a show in Bristol.

DOUBLE COVERS
Hendrix hated the U.K. album art for *Are You Experienced* (below left). The U.S. version is iconic.

"I can't express myself in a conversation.... When you're on stage, it's all in the world. That's your whole life."

–Jimi Hendrix

went on to conclude, "Above all this record is unrelentingly violent."

The Experience may have been too far out for American critics, but the group's unique and innovative sound was the talk of London. Hendrix suddenly found himself being treated differently—more than a star, he was almost a messiah to the tastemakers of pop and rock, who were always searching for the next new thing. Hendrix enjoyed the perks of the attention—"[London is] a great city for girl-watchers," he said in an interview. "They're all so beautiful and so many different nationalities"—but he was also uncomfortable. Despite his wild antics while performing on stage and his attention-grabbing fashion, he was very shy and ironically inexperienced when it came to social interactions.

"I can't express myself in a conversation," the musician later admitted. "I can't explain myself like this or that sometimes 'cause it just doesn't come out like that.... When you're on stage, it's all in the world. That's your whole life."

CHAPTER 5

LEGEND IN HIS OWN TIME

Hendrix came out of nowhere—and then everyone came to see him

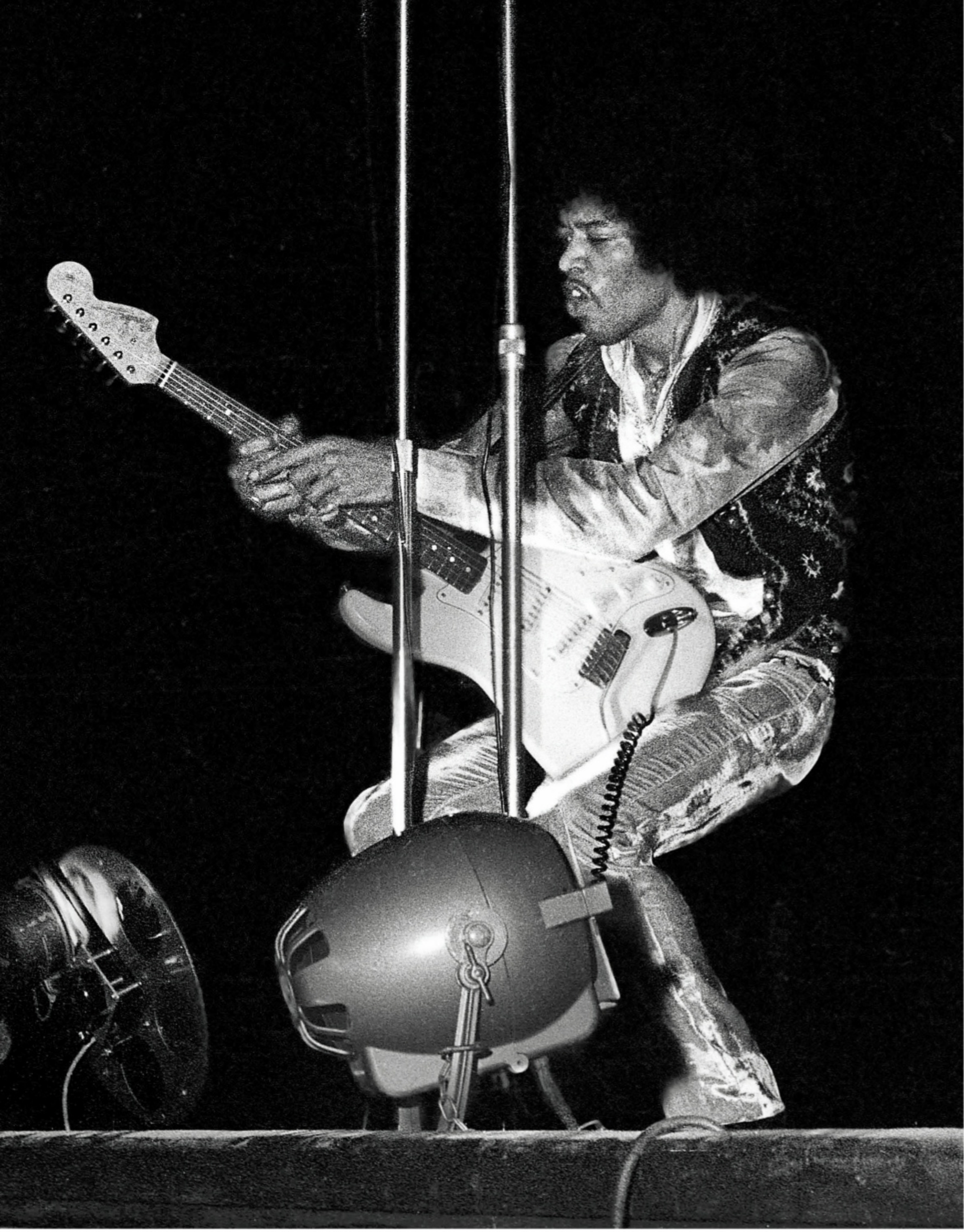
SOUL MAN
Hendrix (right) went from last-minute London traveler to music sensation almost overnight—and then through his own genius transformed himself into something else: a rock 'n' roll icon.

Long before smartphones and social media, Jimi Hendrix had gone viral in London by means of a more traditional form of communication: word of mouth. On Oct. 1, 1966, just a week after his arrival in England, Hendrix played an impromptu jam session with guitarist Eric Clapton and Cream during the encore of the band's show at the Regent Street Polytechnic. Hendrix's manager, Chas Chandler, had convinced Clapton to allow his client to sit in during Cream's set. Clapton was already a guitar hero, and meeting him was the reason Hendrix had agreed to come to London in the first place. (A few months earlier, someone had spray-painted a wall at a North London tube station with the words, "CLAPTON IS GOD."

The 21-year-old Clapton had just mastered the difficult guitar riff from Howlin' Wolf's "Killing Floor," and that was the song selected for the two men to jam on. Clapton's playing was inspired—but Hendrix's was something more. He played his guitar with his teeth, behind his back and through his legs,

Upstaging Clapton would've been enough to cement any guitar player's legend, but Hendrix wasn't done.

SIX-STRING SUMMIT
Hendrix did more than meet Clapton (center) in 1966; he surpassed him as rock's greatest guitarist.



GUITAR GOD
In October 1967, Hendrix (left) demonstrated his virtuosity and showmanship when he and his band played at London's Saville Theatre.

SOUND BITE
Before he wowed fans with the trick in London, Hendrix had learned to play the guitar with his teeth (below) while on the "Chitlin Circuit."

"You never told me he was that f---in' good."

–Eric Clapton

sending the crowd into a frenzy. Midway through the song, Clapton stopped, dropped his hands to his sides and left the stage. Chandler rushed to the dressing room expecting to find him angry, but instead discovered a wonderstruck man trying to light a cigarette with shaking hands. Clapton said, "You never told me he was that f---in' good."

Word of Hendrix's dazzling rendition of "Killing Floor" at the Polytechnic spread so quickly through the London music scene that famous artists began coming out to see the new American guitar sensation who had silenced Clapton. When Hendrix played a tiny club just off Piccadilly Circus called Bag O'Nails a short time later, a who's who of British rock royalty showed up: Pete Townshend, John Entwistle, Bill Wayman, Eric Burdon, Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr were among the witnesses who sardined themselves into the crowd. Hendrix broke into a cover of the Troggs' "Wild Thing" and then did solo after solo. When he finished, the audience fell silent. Everyone was in shock. British guitarist and vocalist Terry Reid (of Peter Jay and the Jaywalkers) said, "Guitar players were weeping ... they had to mop the floor up."

Upstaging Clapton would've been enough to cement any guitar player's legend, but Hendrix wasn't done. In a mind-boggling four-year run, he became the center of the rock 'n' roll universe. In June 1967, The Jimi Hendrix Experience played a cover of the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band"

CHAPTER 5

FIERY PERFORMANCE
In his band's first show in the U.S.—at the 1967 Monterey International Pop Festival—Hendrix set his guitar ablaze and dry-humped an amplifier.

at the Saville as a nod to the Beatles' album of the same name, which had been released a week earlier. Hendrix had never even rehearsed it, but McCartney called it "a shining moment." Hendrix's renown expanded with the release of three Experience albums in rapid succession: *Are You Experienced* in May 1967, *Axis: Bold as Love* seven months later, and the double LP *Electric Ladyland* in October 1968. By the final release, American audiences had at last caught up. *Electric Ladyland* reached No. 1 in the U.S. a month after its debut, and it sparked renewed interest in the group's two previous albums. As a result, Hendrix had three albums in the top 20 in the same year.

While his celebrity grew, Hendrix continued to innovate with the guitar. He pioneered using amplifiers with high volume and gain to produce feedback, which previously had been considered abominable. Hendrix was also one of the first mainstream rockers to incorporate fuzz distortion and the wah-wah pedal, a device that altered the frequencies of the guitar signal. And he was an early adopter to the use of stereophonic phasing effects in recordings. But what cemented Hendrix's status as a guitar god in his own right was his band's first American performance—on June 18, 1967, before as many as 90,000 fans at the Monterey Pop International Festival. In a moment immortalized in D.A. Pennebaker's 1968 documentary, *Monterey Pop*, Hendrix poured lighter fluid on his Stratocaster at the end of his set and lit the guitar on fire. As if that wasn't enough, he also humped his amplifier during the song. In its review of the performance, the *Los Angeles Times* wrote: "When Jimi Hendrix left the stage, he graduated from rumor to legend."

In the spring of 1966, John Lennon ignited a firestorm when he suggested that kids treated the Beatles as something more popular than Jesus. Now, Hendrix had turned rock itself into a spiritual awakening. "If there is a God and He made you, then if you believe in yourself, you're also believing in Him," Hendrix wrote in 1969 in the concert program for his band's shows at London's Royal Albert Hall. "What you are and what you do is your religion.... When I get up on stage, well, that's my whole life. That's my religion. My music is electric church music.... I am electric religion."

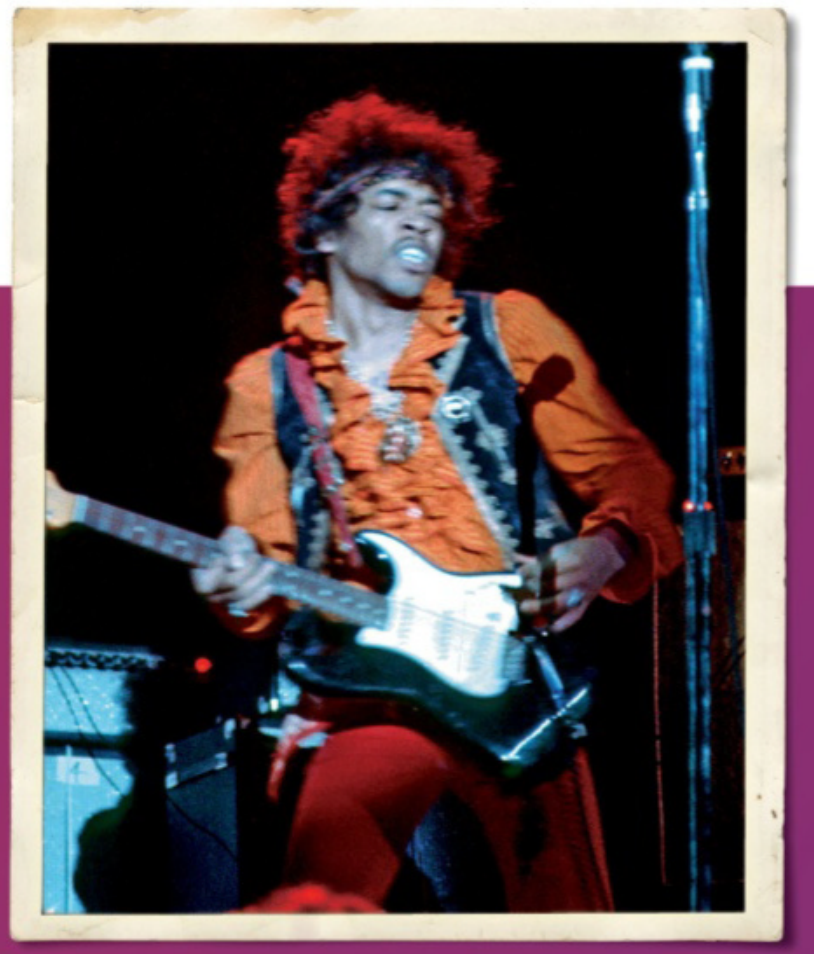
Rock fans did not turn on Hendrix for expressing his beliefs. Instead, they said amen.

"My music is electric church music.... I am electric religion."

–Jimi Hendrix

HARD ROCK
When he played Monterey in June 1967 (below), Hendrix hadn't yet caught on in the U.S. *Rolling Stone* had called his first album "unrelentingly violent."

HOMETOWN HERO
A year after his first live show in his home country (right), all three of Hendrix's albums were in the U.S. top 20 at the same time, and *Electric Ladyland* was No. 1.



CHAPTER 6

GONE TOO SOON

Hendrix's death hit as fast and hard as his rise to fame

MYSTERY MAN

Hendrix's death at the age of 27 left so many questions, not only about how he died, but also about what—if anything—he had been planning for the future.

CHAPTER 6

A few minutes before midnight on Dec. 31, 1969, while recording a live album at the East Village club Fillmore East, Jimi Hendrix pressed his lips close to the microphone and said: "Happy New Year, first of all. I hope we have about a million or two million more of them. If we can get over this summer." He was referring to the recent social unrest that had ripped apart the country, including race riots and protests against the Vietnam War. It was a deeply troubling time, so it must have been heartening to hear a young person express a message of hopefulness. No one knew, though, that Jimi wouldn't make it to the end of the new year.

On Sept. 18, 1970, Hendrix died in London's Samarkand Hotel when he asphyxiated on his own vomit after taking too many sleeping pills. He was 27. According to the coroner's report, there were 400 milliliters of "free fluid" in Hendrix's lungs. When he'd arrived at St. Mary Abbots Hospital, where doctors attempted to revive him, his clothes and hair were drenched in red wine. The official cause of death was listed as "inhalation of vomit [due to] barbiturate intoxication." But the exact circumstances were unknown because there were conflicting reports about his final hours.

Three days before Hendrix's death, German painter (and former figure skater) Monika Dannemann had come to London at his invitation and checked in to the Samarkand. Hendrix and Dannemann had met the year before, after a show in Dusseldorf, and had already had a tryst in London. They'd spent much of his final three days together, and she later claimed she and Hendrix had been planning to get married.

It's certainly possible that the guitarist had been looking to make a change. Hendrix was undeniably famous—something he'd always wanted—but he was defined as much by his stage antics as he was by his music, and he was beginning to feel trapped. Just 12 days before he died, he'd been booed and jeered by the crowd at a show in Fehmarn, Germany, after his performance had been delayed by weather issues.

"One of the reasons that he was so down at the period when he died was because he couldn't find a way out," Keith Richards told *Rolling Stone* in 1981. "He wanted to just go back and start playing some funky music, and when he did, nobody wanted to know....

–Marilyn Monroe

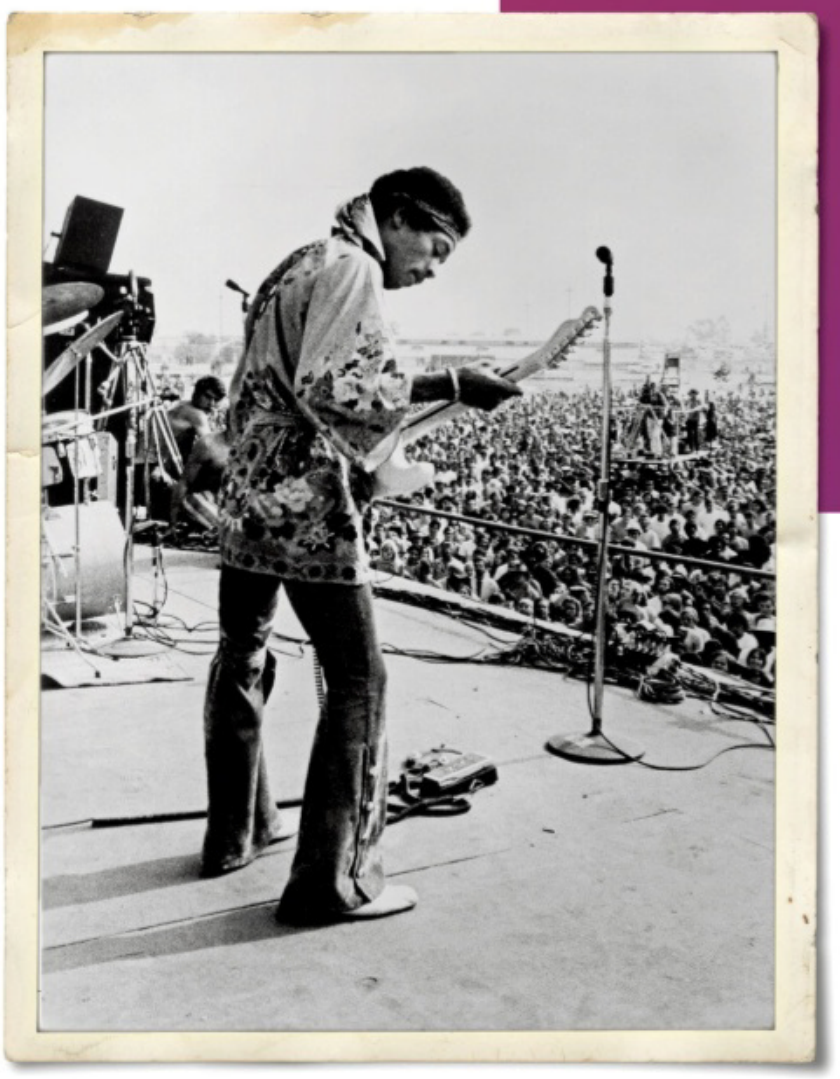
"He wanted to just go back and start playing some funky music, and when he did, nobody wanted to know."

–Keith Richards

FIGURE OF FATE
Former German skater Monika Dannemann (above) spent three days with Hendrix, and was the last to see him alive.

DENTAL TECHNICIAN
On Sept. 9, 1970, Hendrix gave his last concert, in Fehmarn, Germany (right). Weather delayed his show, and the crowd booed him.

Behrens



"The story of life is hello and goodbye ... until we meet again."

–Jimi Hendrix

PEACE OUT
When he arrived for what would be his final concert, Hendrix flashed the symbol that was synonymous with the 1960s (far left).

MELODY MAKER
Hendrix (at a 1968 show, near left) was known as much for his stagecraft as he was for his guitar playing, and near the end, that bothered him.

Everybody got sort of carried on this tidal wave of success for doing outlandish things, until what they were really known for was the outlandishness of what they were doing, and not really what they were doing."

On Sept. 16, 1970, Hendrix played guitar in front of a crowd for the last time, at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club, sitting in for two songs with former Animals lead singer Eric Burdon's new band, War.

The next night, Sept. 17, Hendrix and Dannemann went out for drinks, and then returned to her hotel to eat. At around 1:45 a.m., she drove Hendrix to another party—she wasn't invited up—where he purportedly took a "brown bomber" amphetamine pill. He was back at the Samarkand with Dannemann by around 3 a.m. They stayed up talking (or arguing about his flirtations with other women) until 7:15 a.m. Unable to sleep, Hendrix took nine Vesparax pills—18 times the recommended dosage. Later that morning, Dannemann—thinking he was asleep—went out for cigarettes. She found him unresponsive when she returned and then telephoned for an ambulance at 11:18 a.m.

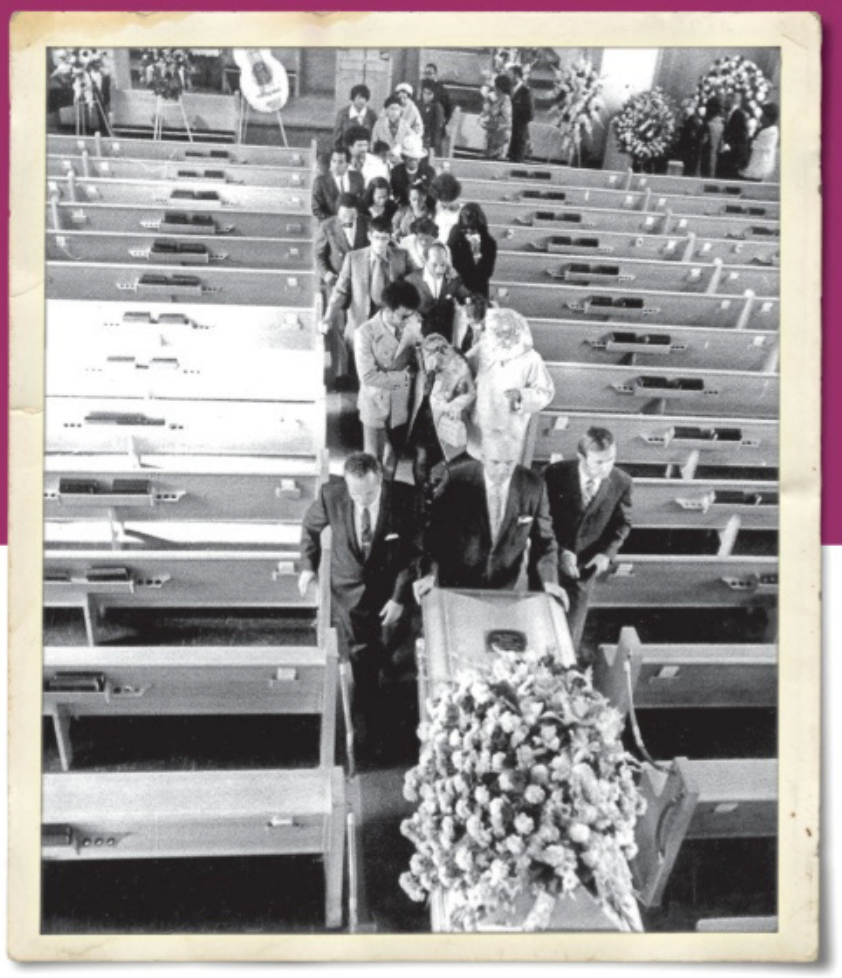
Sometime before the ambulance arrived, Burdon had gone to the Samarkand to visit Hendrix. He believed the guitarist had committed suicide. As evidence, he cited a poem by Hendrix that he'd found among his things that morning. It was called *The Story of Life*, and Burdon read it as a goodbye note. He later took this back, saying he had misread the situation and was mistaken that the death was intentional.

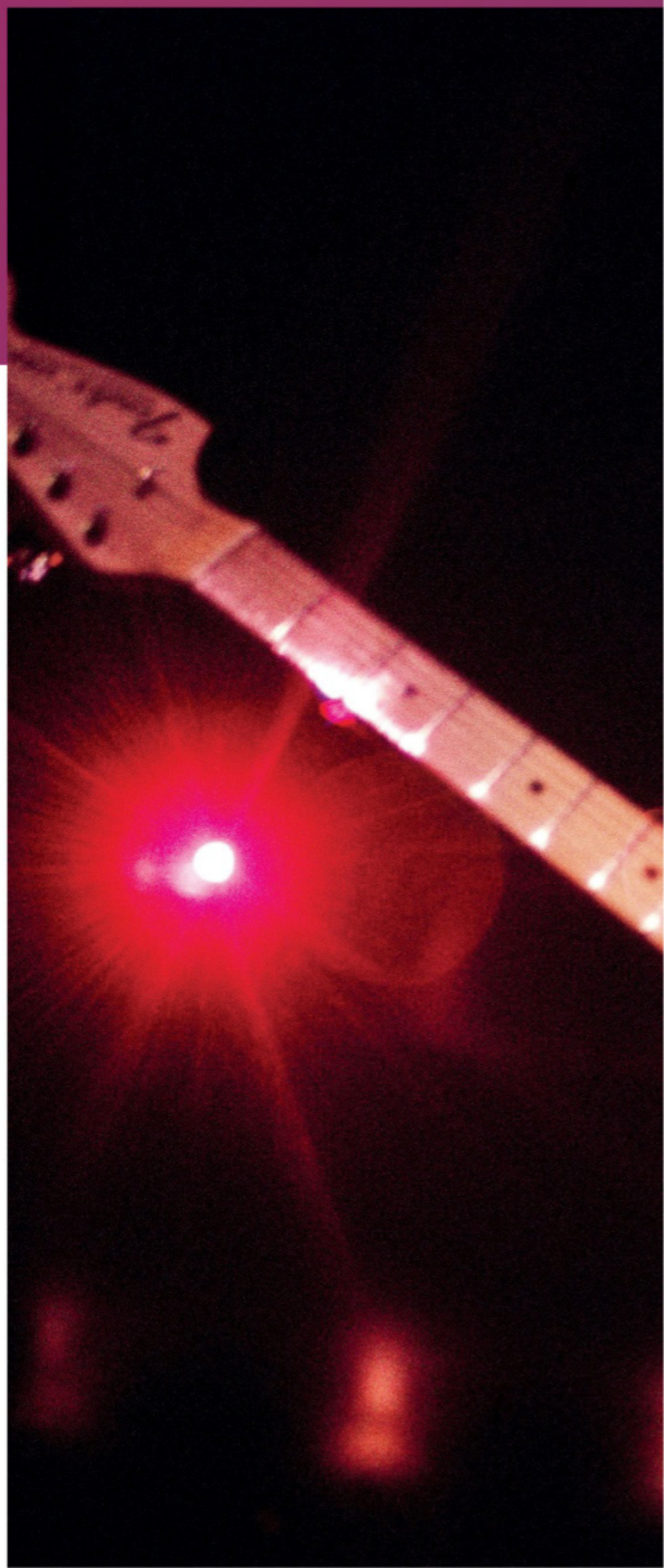
There was a significant gap between the time Hendrix was discovered unresponsive—sometime early that morning—and when the ambulance arrived at the Samarkand at 11:27 a.m. It's hard to know for sure, as Dannemann's story changed numerous times—in one telling, she said she woke up as late as 11 a.m.—and because she herself committed suicide in 1996. (Burdon's stories also changed through the years, but he once said, "We got the drugs out of the place.")

As with the death of Marilyn Monroe—another American icon who died from an overdose of barbiturates—Hendrix's sudden passing spawned conspiracy theories. In one, co-manager Mike Jeffery murdered Hendrix, or had him killed, because the

PARTY ANIMAL
Hendrix goofing backstage at the Olympia in Paris with bassist Noel Redding (right) and Animals lead vocalist Eric Burdon (center). On the day Hendrix died, Burdon was in the guitarist's hotel room for some time before the ambulance arrived.

CHAPTER 6





guitarist was in the process of ending their representation arrangement. (Jeffery, a former MI6 agent, died in a March 1973 plane crash.) Another theory involved the U.S. government; Hendrix had been under FBI surveillance as a perceived threat.

Ten days after Hendrix's death, the London coroner returned an "open verdict," meaning the court was unable to determine exactly what had happened. There had been reports of drug use throughout his career, but a pathologist in the coroner's inquiry said there was no evidence that Hendrix was an addict. As for his psychological state, there were reasons to believe he had plans for the future. From May to August, Hendrix had recorded a trove of new music. In his book *Wild Thing: The Short, Spellbinding Life of Jimi Hendrix*, author Philip Norman concludes that while Hendrix's life had become complicated, his death was easy to explain. "It was an avoidable accident," Norman said in an interview.

The poem Burdon found may not have been Hendrix's suicide note, but it did include these prophetic lines: "The story of life is quicker than the wink of an eye. The story of love is hello and goodbye ... until we meet again."

FINAL FAREWELL
A small group of family and friends attended Hendrix's funeral in Seattle on Oct. 1, 1970 (left).

A VOICE SILENCED
The death of Hendrix (at Madison Square Garden, below) left a vacancy in rock that has never been filled.

CHAPTER 7

THE BATTLE FOR JIMI'S FORTUNE

Hendrix left behind an estate with a value that continues to grow—but no will to account for it

THE TIES THAT BIND
Hendrix's younger brother, Leon (right), is the guitarist's closest surviving relative. But that hasn't guaranteed him a penny from the estate—nor has it kept him from contesting it in court.

"It's funny the way most people love the dead," Jimi Hendrix told *Melody Maker* in March 1969. "Once you are dead you are made for life. You have to die before they think you are worth anything."

When Hendrix died in September 1970, he had only about $20,000 in the bank and a sizable mountain of debt—from taxes, management-contract squabbles, bad investments and a paternity suit. His estate, however, included his music copyrights, royalties, unreleased recordings and the rights to his likeness. The value of this trove of assets grew exponentially in the wake of Hendrix's death, and claims to it remain in dispute more than 50 years later.

Because Hendrix died without a will, his father, Al, a retired Seattle gardener, eventually inherited his son's holdings. He then made a series of agreements with international corporations in 1974, signing away some of his son's music rights in return for a lifetime annuity of $50,000. But by the spring of '76, there were 165 different legal actions involving promoters, lawyers, record labels and offshore companies and the Hendrix estate, which had been on the brink of bankruptcy. In 1993, Al filed a lawsuit that claimed he'd been swindled by a lawyer and various holding companies. Two years later, he finally regained control of music and image rights.

Complicating matters further, other "blood relatives" began to come forward. In 1972, even though no paternity test had been conducted, a New York judge ruled that a 4-year-old girl was Hendrix's daughter by a Minnesota woman who could not make a claim to his estate. And a Swedish court decided in 1975—again, with no paternity test—that James Hendrik Daniel Sundquist was Hendrix's son by a Swedish woman with whom he'd had a brief tryst six years earlier. When he turned 24, Sundquist

CARRYING ON
Hendrix's estate has been in dispute practically since the end of his funeral in Seattle's Dunlap Baptist Church.

FAMILY HEAD
Below, from left: Mitch Mitchell, Guns N' Roses guitarist Slash and Janie Hendrix, Jimi's adopted sister, at the U.K. Music Hall of Fame.

FOUNDERING FATHER
Hendrix's dad, Al (right), inherited his son's estate—which grew quickly—but which was also swamped in legal challenges.

When Hendrix died ... he had only about $20,000 in the bank and a sizable mountain of debt.

sued Hendrix's estate, but didn't pursue the case to a conclusion. (According to Philip Norman's 2020 book, *Wild Thing*, Al Hendrix had already met James Sundquist when he was 7 years old and agreed to give him and his mother about $1 million.)

Despite the estate being "settled" at least twice—in 2004 and '15—it has remained contested. When Hendrix's father died of congestive heart failure in April 2002, he left the estate to his adopted daughter, Janie, one of the five children of his second wife, Ayako, who'd died in 1999. This instigated a family feud over Jimi's financial legacy. Janie, along with 11 other people—including Jimi's cousin Bob—ran the company Experience Hendrix, which among other things oversaw the licensing of Jimi's likeness, as well as Seattle's popular Experience Music Project. But Janie drew scrutiny for her decisions as caretaker of her adoptive brother's legacy. Some of the merchandise approved on her watch included golf balls with Hendrix's face on them and Jimi Hendrix vanilla-scented automobile air fresheners.

Janie Hendrix was 9 years old when Jimi died. He had a closer relationship with his brother, Leon. The two boys had grown up looking out for one another and remained close until Jimi's death.

£4.00 EACH

Jimi Hendrix MUSICIAN
Jimi Hendrix MUSICIAN
Jimi Hendrix MUSICIAN

SELLING A LEGEND
The marketing of Hendrix's legacy—his music and his image—is big business, with his face on everything from T-shirts to golf balls (left).

STEP-SIBLING RIVALRY
Leon (below) has been in frequent dispute with Janie and the estate over his attempts to profit off of his brother's fame.

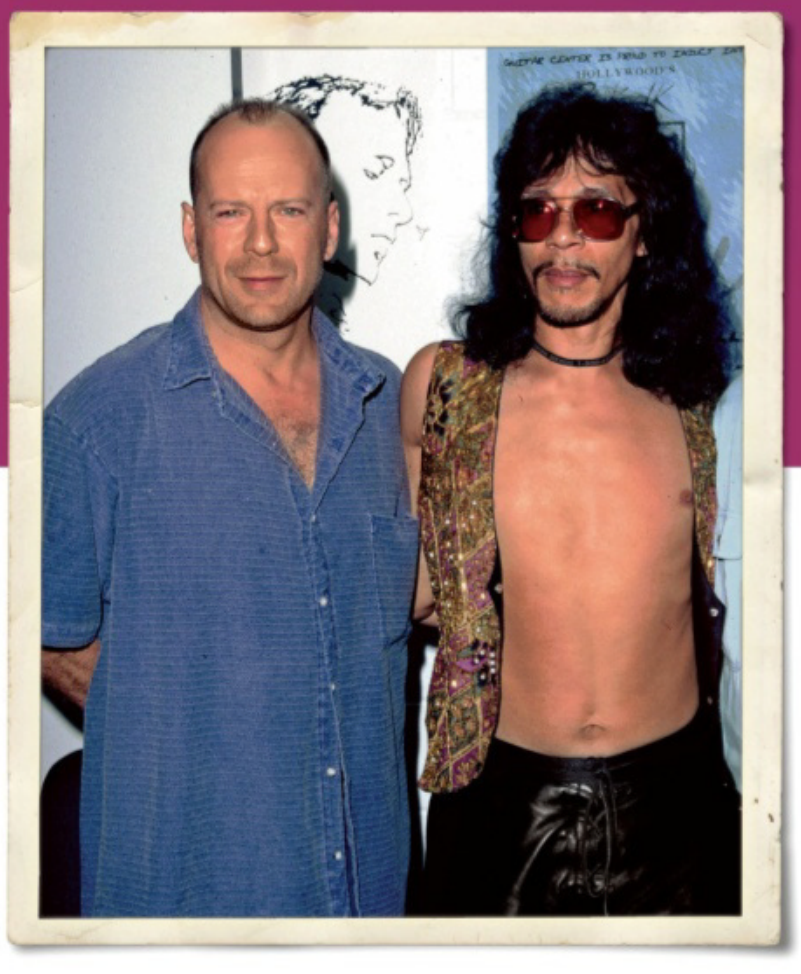
CHAPTER 7

ENDURING NAME
In 1997, Leon (below, right, with actor Bruce Willis) represented the Hendrix family at an event honoring singer Stephen Stills on Hollywood's Rock-Walk.

FORTUNATE SON
James Sundquist in 1994 (right), the year he sued Hendrix's estate. A Swedish court had ruled in 1975 that Sundquist was Hendrix's son.

"Ever since [Hendrix's] first record came out, people have been fighting over the money."

–Charles Cross



But a judge found that Al Hendrix wrote Leon out of his will in 1998 because of Leon's struggles with drug addiction, an unwillingness to work and repeated demands for money. Four years later, Leon Hendrix sued Janie for a quarter of the estate on the grounds that she had pressured Al to write him off. All Leon had inherited was one of Jimi's gold records.

Ultimately, in 2007, Leon Hendrix lost. The Washington State Supreme Court upheld his single-gold-record inheritance. But even that did not settle the issue. Leon was selling merchandise bearing his famous brother's likeness anyway—without permission—through a Nevada-based company, Hendrix Licensing. In 2009, Janie filed a $1.7 million lawsuit against the company. Six years later, after a May 2015 injunction that prohibited Hendrix Licensing from using Jimi Hendrix trademarks, the parties settled. Hendrix Licensing paid undisclosed damages and went ahead with producing and selling Hendrix merchandise through two designated companies.

But still the fight was not over. In 2020, as the Jimi Hendrix 50th Anniversary Memorial approached, a federal court in New York ordered Leon to pay more than $400,000 in trademark infringement damages to the companies officially overseen by the estate.

To this day, the court system remains center stage for disputes over the Jimi Hendrix's legacy. In January 2022, the estate sued the heirs of the guitarist's former bandmates in the Jimi Hendrix Experience, claiming they have no claim to any compensation because bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mike Mitchell had signed their rights away decades before. The heirs of Redding and Mitchell, meanwhile, are trying to get their case heard by authorities in the U.K.

The total value of Jimi Hendrix's estate is worth an estimated $175 million. In 2004, Hendrix biographer Charles Cross glumly summed up the entire situation to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*: "The sad legacy of Jimi Hendrix is that ever since his first record came out, people have been fighting over the money."

CHAPTER 8

LIVING LEGACY

Why Hendrix's legend will never die

SIGN O' THE TIMES
Hendrix's style—the hair, the clothes, the peace symbols—epitomize the 1960s, but his music is timeless, as resonant and magical today as it was when it was first recorded.

THE

In 2011, *Rolling Stone* asked a panel of guitarists and critics to rank the 100 greatest guitarists in rock history. The list was illuminating and controversial (Eddie Van Halen at No. 8?!), but the top choice was hard to challenge: Jimi Hendrix. Ask any rock fan to name the greatest ever and Hendrix is likely to be the answer—even if the fan wasn't yet born before he died.

His playing was not only skilled, it was transformative. Hendrix was a catalyst who helped innovate most genres of contemporary music, including rock, funk, R&B, rap, jazz and electronica. His pioneering style fused fuzz, feedback and designed distortion to create what he called "electric religion"—a new musical form altogether. Despite having only a four-year run as a headliner, Hendrix's playing style changed the course of music history, from his whooshing underwater phasing on *Electric Ladyland*, to stretched jams on "Voodoo Chile," to any number of his howling, fevered riffs. His style of dress and hair symbolize the psychedelic '60s, but his music is timeless.

"He belongs to a group ... [of] people who transcend trends or fashions or anything like that."

–Carlos Santana

HEAD SCRATCHER
The consummate showman, Hendrix played the guitar above his head at a show in Hamburg, Germany, on March 17, 1967 (left).

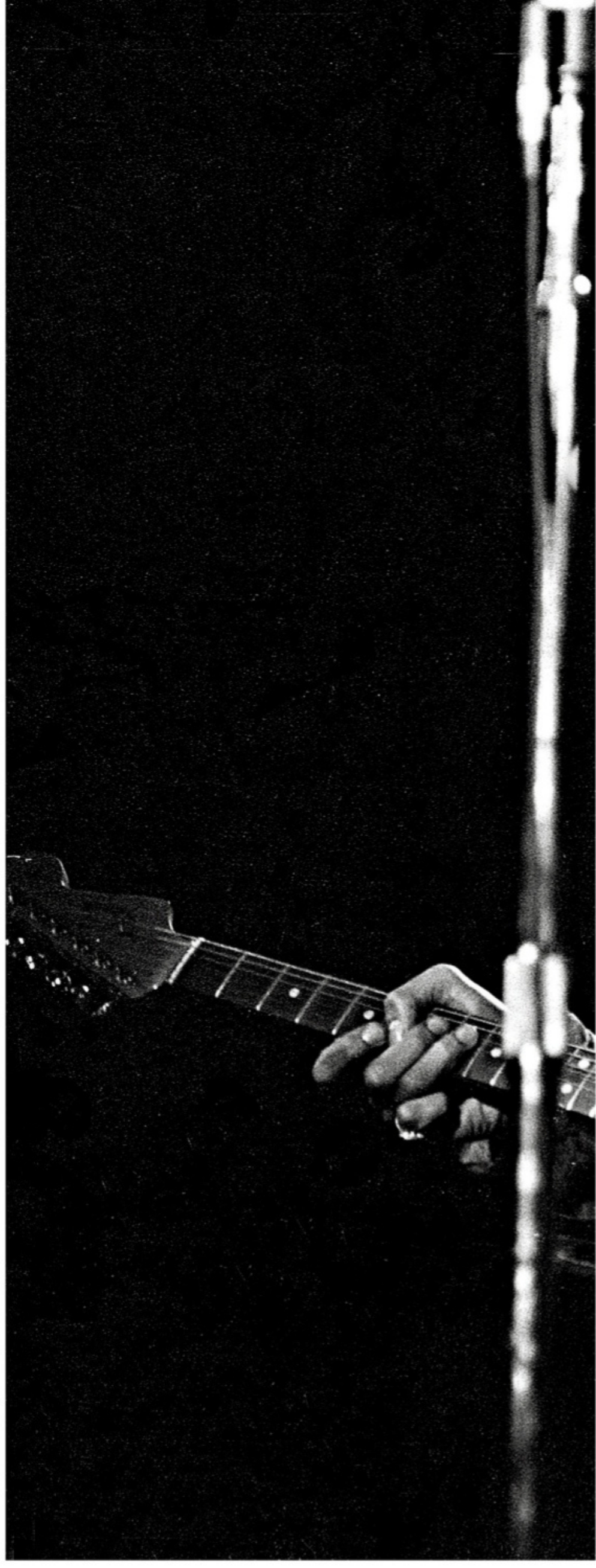
THE LOWDOWN
Hendrix moved to his music during the Experience's performance at Paris' Olympia Theatre in January 1968 (below).

CHAPTER 8

“He belongs to a group, the Beethovens, the Stravinskys, the Picassos, people who transcend trends or fashions or anything like that,” said Carlos Santana in 2004. “They are all like Da Vincis to me.”

As a pure entertainer, Hendrix’s penchant for improvisation is still considered cutting-edge. Whenever a guitarist steps into the spotlight to take a solo, they are trying their hardest to channel the spirit of Jimi. When Hendrix set his guitar on fire at the Monterey International Pop Festival in 1967, he lit a beacon for rock stars to follow that could be seen for generations.

Like any pioneer, Hendrix paid a price for his achievements. Even his first attempt to light his guitar ablaze—on March 31, 1967, at London’s Finbury Park Astoria club—sent him to the hospital with burns on his hands. And before his death, Hendrix grappled with the artist’s eternal challenge: to define what comes next after you’ve reached the top.



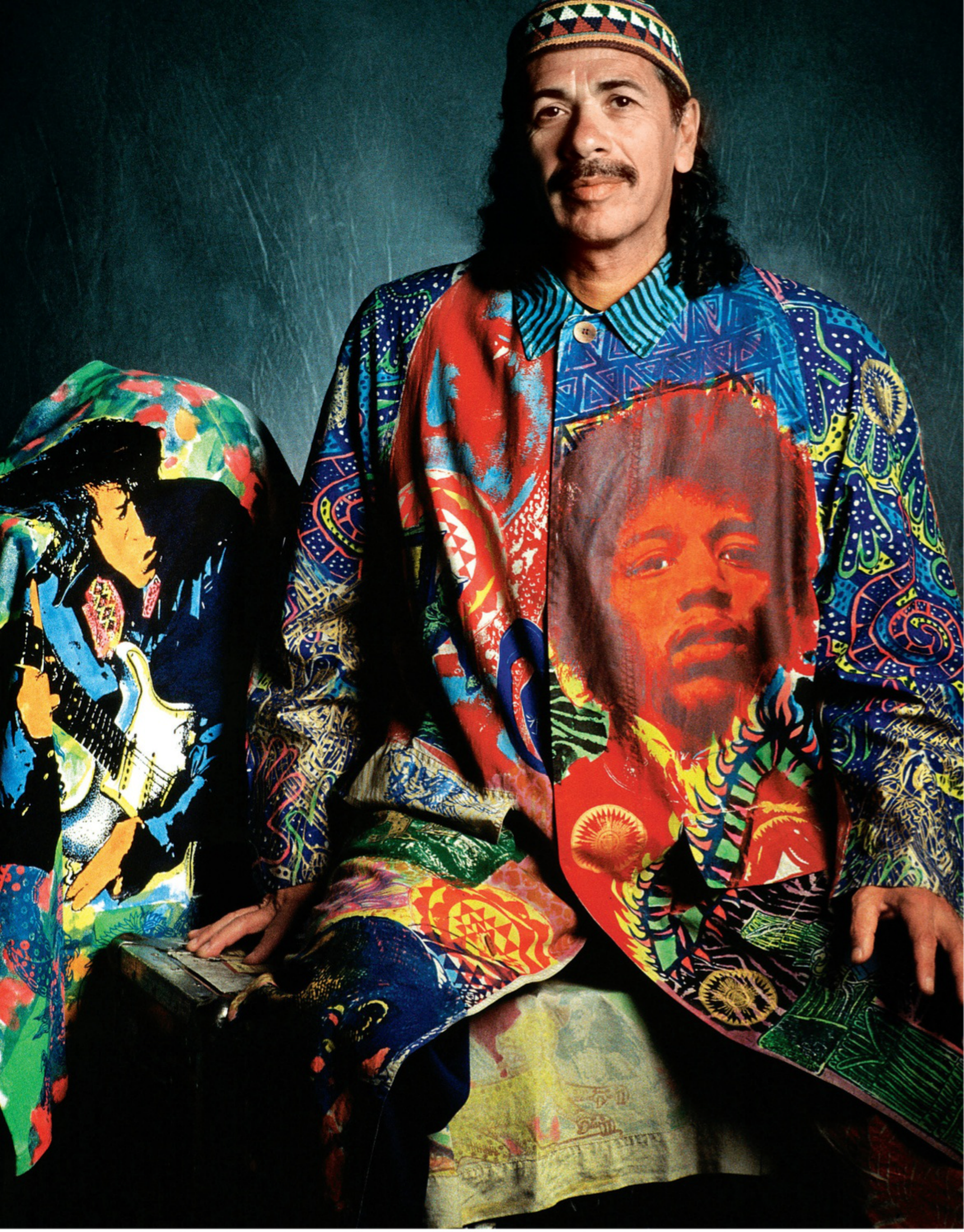
SPOTLIGHT EFFECT
Hendrix in 1970 (above), the year of his death. Before he died, he was contemplating new directions for his music.

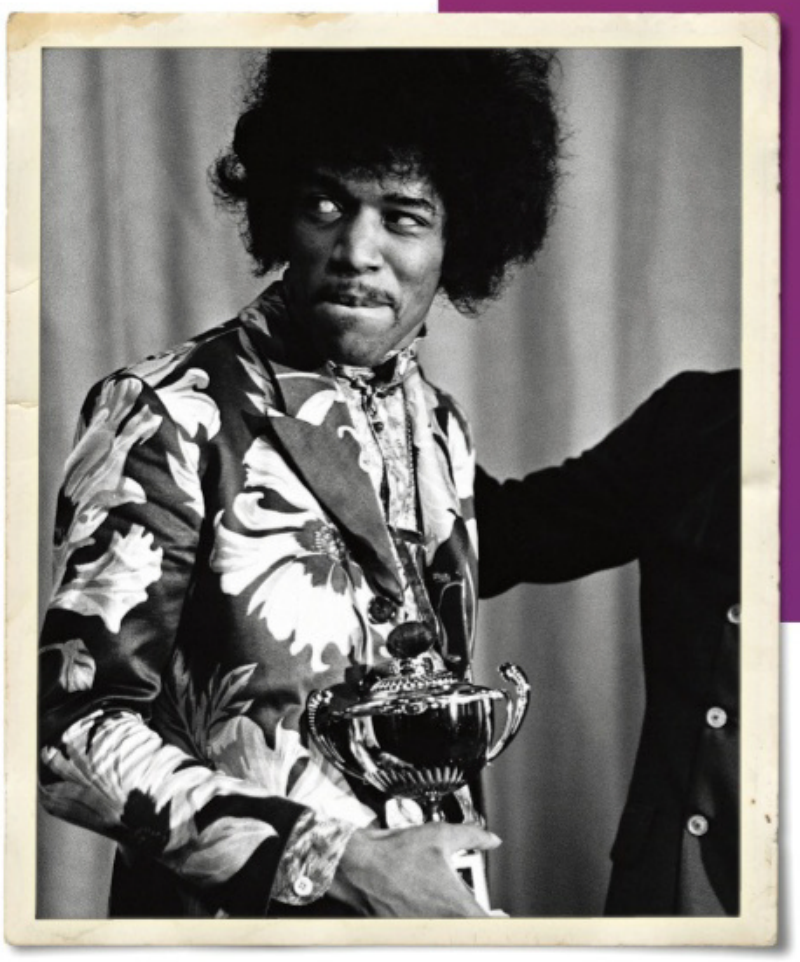
HOMECOMING KING
The Jimi Hendrix Experience made its U.S. debut (right) in June 1967, at the Monterey International Pop Festival.

CHAPTER 8

REVOLUTION KID
Prince (left) hated to be compared to other musicians, but he admitted that he had learned from the music and stylings of Hendrix.

SCOWLIN' WOLF
Just as Hendrix (below) taught himself to play guitar by listening to blues legends, so too do today's six-string heroes study his artistry.





“Technically, I’m not a guitar player.... All I play is truth and emotion.”

–Jimi Hendrix

FACE PRINT
Guitar legend Carlos Santana (far left, in Rome in 1996) considers Hendrix to be a transcendent figure like Beethoven or Picasso.

TROPHY ACE
On Sept. 21, 1967, Hendrix (near left) won the award for World’s Best Musician, as chosen by readers of *Melody Maker* magazine.

It’s impossible to know what he would have come up with—but it seems safe to assume it would have propelled music forward.

After Hendrix died, countless performers stepped forward to fill the void. It’s a diverse group of greats that includes David Bowie, Prince, Miles Davis and The Cure. Prince didn’t like being compared to anyone, though he conceded the obvious—he’d learned from Hendrix. The Cure’s Robert Smith said that Hendrix had inspired him to form a band. “Jimi Hendrix changed my life,” Smith said. “Each generation influences the following one and as a consequence brings it back to the past.”

But, unlike many other artists of his era, Hendrix’s past is referenced for inspiration rather than pure nostalgia. To this day, millions of fans turn to his music to find knowledge. In 2021, one YouTube commenter wrote the perfect truism of Hendrix’s enduring sound: “You can listen to Jimi a hundred times and still go back and learn something new you missed.”

The irony of Hendrix as a teacher is that he never had the benefit of one himself. Hendrix created his style and technique all on his own. Before his death, he mentioned his love of classical music—Strauss and Wagner were good “cats”—and his desire to become even better. “I’d like to take a six-month break and go to a school of music,” he said. “I want to learn to read music, be a model student and study and think.”

That Jimi considered formal training suggests that, had he lived past the age of 27, he might have blended the traditional with the avant-garde. The power of that combination is epic—in music and beyond.

“Music doesn’t lie,” he said. “When there are vast changes in the way the world goes, it’s usually something like art and music that changes it. Music is going to change the world next time.”

Hendrix also said this: “Technically, I’m not a guitar player.... All I play is truth and emotion.” Hendrix—whose ancestry was African American and Irish—was once asked if he considered himself white or Black. He replied: “I’m from Mars.” A talented, abstract, guitar-playing genius from outer space sounds about right. The truth is, we’re all still working to catch up to Jimi Hendrix.

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–Jimi Hendrix